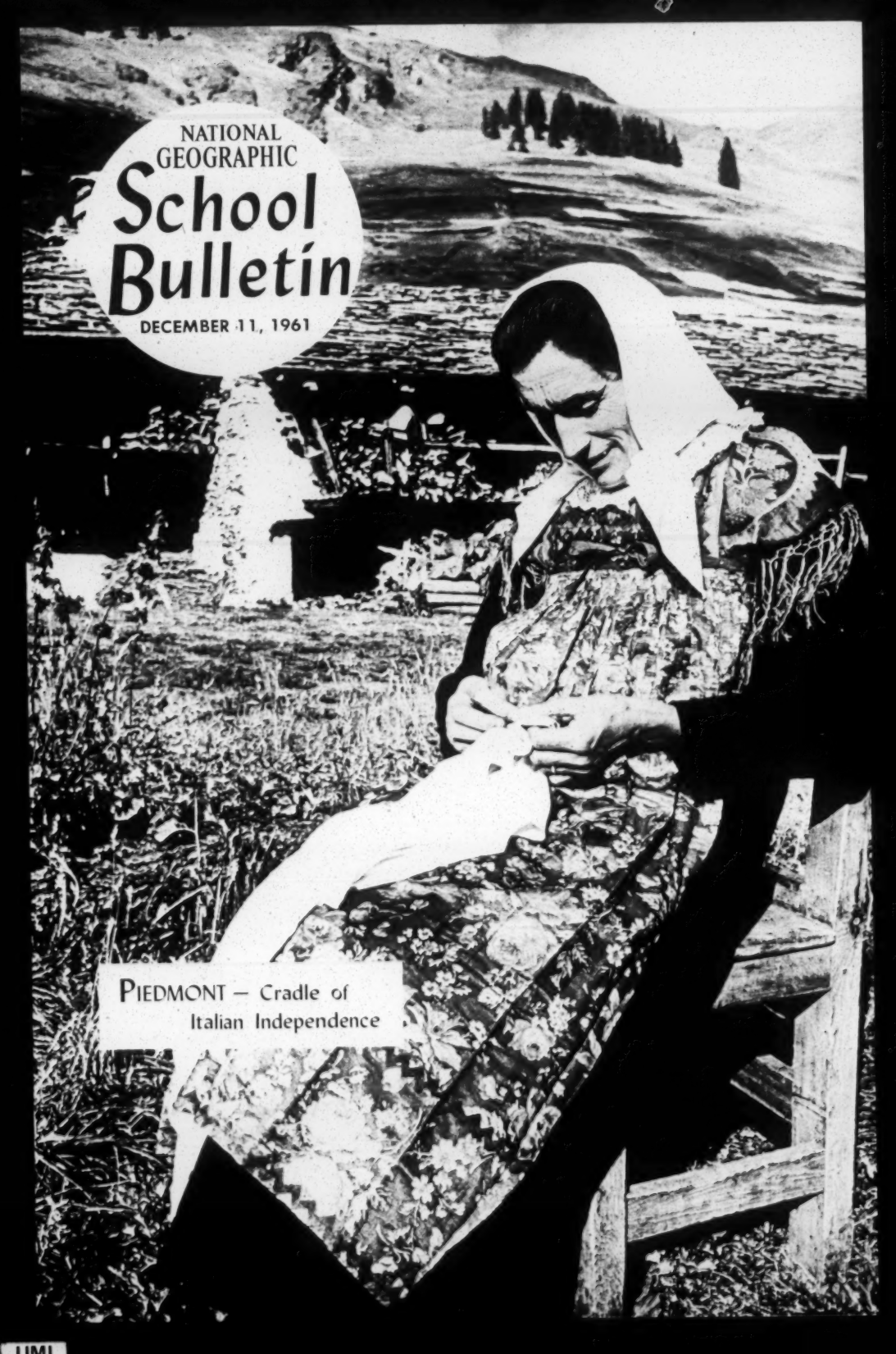
NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
School
Bulletin
DECEMBER 11, 1961
PIEDMONT — Cradle of
Italian Independence

FACTORY smoke mists the castle at Sarre, Valle D'Aosta, home of Italy's first king

Where Modern Italy Was Born

ITALY, the boot-shaped country that juts from Europe like a leg wading in the Mediterranean, celebrates 100 years of freedom and unity this year.

The cradle of this modern, well-to-do country is the Piedmont, a region in the northwest corner about the size of Vermont.

A little more than 100 years ago, Italy did not exist. The "boot" was a collection of areas ruled by foreign powers. Only Piedmont was free.

Led, pushed, and helped by the Piedmont prime minister, Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, the rest of Italy threw out the foreigners. In 1861, representatives of the new country's regions met in the Piedmont city of Turin. They proclaimed Victor Emmanuel II king of unified Italy. (At left, visitors tour Turin's

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Photographs by Walter M. Edwards, National Geographic Staff

Palazzo Carignano, Italy's first house of parliament.)

Italians call the birth of their nation *Il Risorgimento.* It means to Italy what July the Fourth means to the United States.

On its 100th birthday, Italy is experiencing a second Risorgimento. This time it is a resurgence of prosperity.

In the 16 years since the end of World War II, Italians, like West Germans and Japanese, have rebuilt a defeated, devastated nation. In the new push toward a better life, Piedmont again leads.

Watch the bustle of a Fiat factory in Mirafiori, near Turin, the Italian Detroit. (Cars are Italy's most important export.)

The shining auto body swings down from above, grabbing an engine on the floor between its front wheels. Minutes later, the almost finished car rolls down a ramp and purrs away.

A mechanic drives the newborn automobile out of the factory and under a battery of powerful water jets to test the car's rainproofing. Then he steps on the gas and races the vehicle around a test speedway.

FROM fat grapes like these grown on arbors in the village of Tofa, Valle D'Aosta, come Italian wines.

Every day 2,000 cars roll off Fiat assembly lines ready to join the world's traffic jams.

Fiat (complete name: *Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino)* turns out plenty of things besides cars. It manufactures buses, streetcars, fighter planes for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, steel, refrigerators, and diesel engines. The firm helped build the Kariba Dam on the Zambezi

TURIN baker prepares crusty breadsticks – Italians call them *grissini* – for the oven. There were breadsticks before there was an Italy. In 1680 a young Piedmont prince with a delicate stomach could not digest bread. So his doctor and a baker devised the breadstick – all crust. Now all Piedmontese eat them.

National Geographic Photographer Dean Conger

PARADE of cars marches along the assembly line in the Fiat factory near Turin, Italy's Detroit.

SMILING children of Fiat employees march to the playing fields. The company operates this summer camp in the Alpine town of Ulzio. The round tower is a dormitory. Fiat also sends children to the seaside in summer.

River in Africa. It helps dig highway tunnels through the Alps.

The big company acts something like a father to its workers. It operates day nurseries, hospitals, and recreation centers for employees.

On the rolling green court of a company sports club, workers play at *bocce,* an Italian form of bowling. Other workers may play in a Fiat jazz band, or race bicycles with a Fiat group.

Another famous Piedmontese product comes from Ivrea. In a huge factory, the firm of Olivetti turns out typewriters for 180 different languages.

From Alessandria the firm of Borsalino sells felt hats to 74 countries, including cowboy hats to Venezuela, narrow-brimmed models to Indian women in Bolivia, fezzes, topees, sombreros, and toreador hats.

Piedmont is a Region, similar to a state in this country. Italy holds 19 such regions. Piedmont is the second largest (after Sicily). Piedmont in turn is made up of six provinces.

Valle D'Aosta was long a part of Piedmont. Since 1948, however, its people have managed

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their own affairs. They elect their own legislature, collect their own taxes. Two visiting supervisors from Rome see that Aostians obey the laws of Italy.

At the northwest corner of Piedmont, the valley nudges the French border, and its people speak French as well as Italian.

Lake Maggiore, Italy's longest lake, divides Piedmont from neighboring Lombardy, then curves across the Swiss border.

Just south of Ivrea spread the rice fields of the Po Valley. Here Piedmontese grow most of Italy's rice and a large share of Europe's.

Teams of women in cone-shaped hats work the flooded paddies. Bent double, in water up to their knees, they pluck new shoots and tie them in bundles for transplanting.

The Piedmont holds nearly 4 million people. Turin (Torino) is its capital and its largest city.

Piedmont means "foot of the mountain," and it lies at the feet of the highest peaks in the European Alps. The tallest has two names: Mont Blanc in French, Monte Bianco in Italian. Both mean white mountain. It soars 15,771 feet.

The snow-topped peaks are seldom out of sight in the Piedmont. In Turin, people don't ask if the sun is out, but whether the mountains are out.

Down each Alpine valley lashes a mountain stream—a *torrente* the Italians call it—carrying melted snow to feed the Po River. Wild flowers carpet the glens. High on the slopes, terraced vineyards give way to tall pines and green pastures.

Among the mountains, villagers, like the woman on the cover, preserve age-old customs. L.B.

MONT BLANC rears above Piedmont. Skiers flock to Courmayeur in the valley

America's Own Piedmont

THE eastern United States has its own Piedmont. It is not as rugged as the Italian one, but it is named for the same reason.

A *piedmont* is any area lying at the base of mountains. Italy's Piedmont lies at the base of the Alps; America's lies at the foot of the Blue Ridge (see map). The word comes from two French words, *pied* meaning foot and *mont* meaning mountain. An English word that means about the same thing is "foothills."

A strange thing about the American Piedmont is that, while it lies below the level of the Blue Ridge, it stands *above* the level of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. From the point of view of the ocean, the Piedmont is a plateau (an elevated plain), but from the point of view of the Blue Ridge it is a low-lying area.

Both points of view are covered in the geologic name for the region: the Piedmont Plateau. Translating this into everyday English, it means "the lowland upland."

The Piedmont is as much an either/or place as its name indicates. In some parts it is level and flat, with gently rolling, grassy hills. At other places ranges of foothills give it a mountainous look.

Let's take a trip across the Piedmont by following the James River upstream from its mouth to its mountain source. At first it is broad tidewater, cutting a sluggish path through the rather flat Atlantic Coastal Plain. Sandy soil supports tangled woods and clearings of tobacco, cotton, and corn.

As we near Richmond, the

SOME of the Piedmont's best wheatlands lie near the town of Piedmont, South Carolina. North Carolina's Piedmont is noted for textile mills and tobacco.

National Geographic Photographer Robert F. Sisson

capital of Virginia, the land begins to rise in hills. Tidewater ends and we come to the falls of the James—a series of swift rapids. At the top of these falls the Piedmont begins.

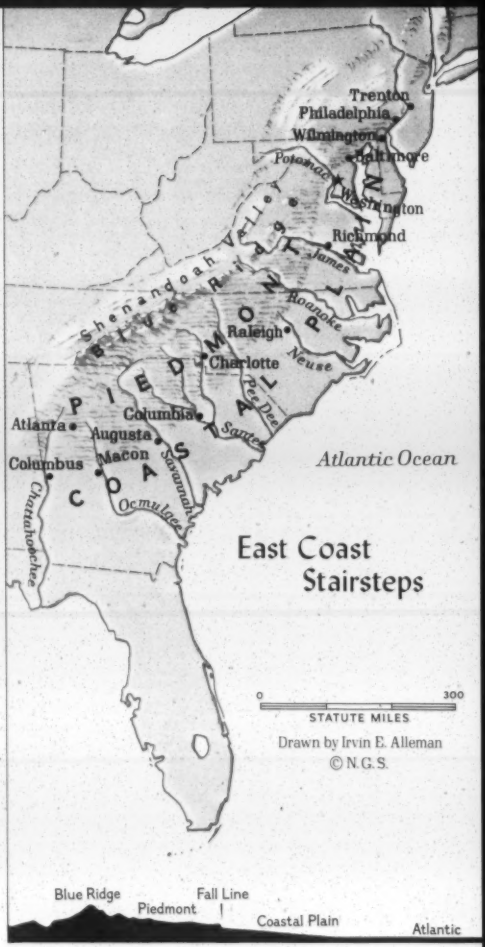
After portaging our make-believe craft up the rocky steps we pause and look north and south. In our mind's eye we see an imaginary line joining our noisy waterfall with similar falls on all other rivers that tumble from the Piedmont to the Coastal Plain.

This is the Fall Line, the eastern and southern boundary of the Piedmont.

Because all travelers had to pause to get around the various falls, a settlement grew up at each one. These places grew and in time became such cities as Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D. C.; Columbia, South Carolina; and Augusta, Georgia.

Pushing upstream again, we enter the pleasant, rolling Piedmont. The land is more open, with more pasture and croplands. We see no cities, but the area is well settled. We climb slightly all the time. Soon mountains appear. At first they are just bigger hills, then they become short ranges, or occasional round-topped peaks. By the time we reach Lynchburg the river is flowing within a rocky canyon.

The Blue Ridge itself is ahead of us, a green wall 4,000 feet high between us and the Shenandoah Valley. Soon we are fighting our way up almost continuous rapids in the gap that the James River has cut through the ridge. We have crossed the Piedmont. R.G.



THE PIEDMONT stretches through nine states—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama. It rises from around 200 feet at the Fall Line to about 1,000 feet at the base of the Blue Ridge. Its largest cities (aside from those on the Fall Line) are Atlanta, Georgia, and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Historically, the Piedmont section of Virginia is similar to Italy's Piedmont. Its greatest citizen was Thomas Jefferson of Charlottesville who, like the Italian Count di Cavour, helped spearhead his nation's independence.

There is another piedmont in the United States. It lies at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

THREE cardboard kings serve as models for this Christmas card artist

FORECAST: Blizzard of Christmas Cards

EVERYBODY likes Christmas cards—except, maybe, the postman.

But the chances are that even that gentleman, his back bent from carrying other persons' greetings, comes home and writes a few of his own.

Then come the familiar remarks:

"Where's the list from last year?"

"You lick for a while, and let me address."

"But they sent us one last year."

"We've got five cards, four envelopes, and seven names left. What now?"

What happens now is that the sore-footed postman walks out and gets some more cards to carry his good wishes to his friends.

The people who make the cards believe that more than three billion—3,000,000,000—will be sent this year. This is enough for every man, woman, and child in the United States to send and receive 16. (Actually, the humans will receive less than that. There are cards that relay best wishes from "our cat to your cat" and the same with dogs and parakeets.)

For all this Christmas cheer, Americans pay about $300 million for the cards, and another $100 million for postage. Most of the cards cost only a few cents.

The most popular designs this

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year will include religious themes, and pictures of other familiar Christmas symbols: candles, holly and poinsettia, snow scenes, Christmas trees, Santa Claus.

These cards have made themselves an automatic part of the American Christmas but as Christmas customs go, they are rather a young tradition.

In age they can't compare with kissing under the mistletoe or decking the halls with boughs of holly.

The Christmas card as we know it today first appeared in England in the 1840's.

Who sent the first? Historians do not agree.

One person suggested is a vicar of Newcastle, the Reverend Edward Bradley, who is said to have sent printed cards to his friends in 1844.

A young engraver named William Egley is honored by other people. His Christmas card was produced in 1842 or 1849, depending on how you read the date. It is now displayed in the British Museum.

Many people give first-place credit to Sir Henry Cole, who had a painter design a card in 1843. The result was a three-panel greeting, showing a family gathered around a large bowl. The card carried the familiar greeting: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." About 1,000 of these cards were printed.

Regardless of who was first, Christmas cards were on sale all over London by the end of the 1850's. They became more and more popular, finally jumped the Atlantic and took root in the United States.

Some of the serious early Christmas cards would bring giggles today. One wished the receiver "A Most Consummate Xmas & an Utterly Utter New Year." Another offered the "Quite too Precious Compliments of the Season."

Now, of course, there are some Christmas cards intended to be funny—although they are far less popular than serious ones.

One comic card shows Santa Claus on the outside, with the words: "A Message from Santa." Inside the card Santa asks, "How would you like it if I didn't believe in you?" F.S.

COPYING the lettering style from an old, hand-painted hymn, a modern artist puts ancient feeling in a card version of "Silent Night."

Photographs from Hallmark Cards, Inc.

The Old Explorer

ONCE I talked to a 6th grade class about Lewis and Clark. I told of following their route through the West and seeing many of the animals and birds that the great explorers had first seen—grizzlies, buffalo, prairie dogs, Rocky Mountain sheep, prairie chickens, pronghorn antelope.

Afterward, I was surprised that almost every question from the class concerned the hunting and killing of this wildlife. Could we, the children asked, hunt bear and antelope if we went West? What kind of guns would be best? Did I kill any animals myself?

I explained that Lewis and Clark and the pioneers who followed them had to kill game for their food. But grocery stores supply western travelers today; shooting animals is not necessary. I further explained that most of the large mammals are so reduced in numbers that they are found only on preserves where it is against the law to shoot them.

As the questions continued in this vein, I finally called a halt, saying that I had no desire to kill these or any other animals—regardless of regulations.

With the hunting season now in full blast in many parts of the country, this seems a good time to consider the "sport" of killing. It is true that primitive man had an instinct to kill. This was largely self-preservation; if he did not kill the animal, it killed him. Also, the animals provided food.

Ten thousand years of civilization have removed the need to kill wildlife, but this ancient instinct apparently still lives. Almost all children, at one time or another, have the urge to "go hunting," and many actually do it. Most of them, as they grow up, put away this childish impulse and begin to see the woods and rivers as places where every animal has a role in the balance of nature. Man is the intruder and nothing is more out-of-place than the shattering sound of gunfire.

Wild creatures have instincts of their own and one of the strongest is to run and hide when man—the mortal enemy—approaches. Small wonder that they fear hunters when—in a country where no one needs to slay game to live—national magazines constantly recruit more and more killers with such articles as "A Woodchuck Shoot: an ideal way to introduce the wife and kids to the fun of shooting."

The "fun" of shooting wildlife is something which I have never understood. One of my colleagues, who admitted enjoying hunting as a boy, told me he discovered long ago that shooting with a camera was much more fun. Another said that simply looking and listening are the woodland's best rewards. These comments recall Sam Foss's poem, *The Bloodless Sportsman:*

I go a-gunning, but take no gun;
I fish without a pole;
And I bag good game and catch such fish as suit a sportsman's soul;
For the choicest game that the forest holds, and the best fish of the brook,
Are never brought down by a rifle shot and never are caught with a hook.

I bob for fish by the forest brook,
I hunt for game in the trees,
For bigger birds than wing the air or fish that swim the seas.
A rodless Walton of the brooks, a bloodless sportsman, I—
I hunt for the thoughts that throng the woods, the dreams that haunt the sky.

Pirates Swarm Celebes Sea

Pirates are again prowling the Celebes Sea, a crossroads of shipping in the Southern Pacific.

Although the British Navy patrols the area constantly, it has had little luck in catching the sea robbers. The pirate ships look like other cargo boats in the

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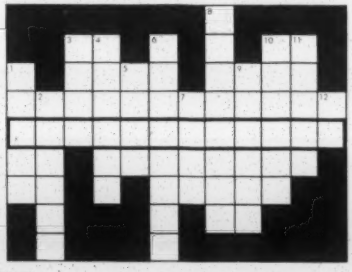
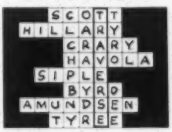
The outlined word is used by Italians to describe their nation's modern rebirth. All words are used in the Italian Piedmont story, pages 121 to 125.



DOWN

1. Capital of the Piedmont
2. First Italian king was _____ Emmanuel
3. Mountains that edge the Piedmont
4. Piedmont prime minister who led Italy's states to unity
5. Fiat product
6. Italy's longest lake
7. Chief crop of the Piedmont
8. "Foot of the Mountain"
9. In the western Piedmont, people speak _____
10. Mont Blanc is Monte _____
11. Valle D'_____
12. The _____ River drains the Piedmont

LAST WEEK'S ANSWER



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waters around the Philippines, Indonesia, and the British Crown Colony of North Borneo.

Well-stocked with hidden guns, the pirates cruise under an innocent-looking sail. As they near a victim, the sail is struck. The thieves come alongside under fast engine power. Resistance to the ocean burglars earns only death.

The seafaring people of the area have suffered at pirates' hands many times in the past. But reports from there say this new rash of sea robberies is the worst since the early 18th century, the great day of piracy.

The thieves are known to be from the Sulu Archipelago, a group of small islands in the southwestern Philippines. Piracy has been a profession here for centuries. Authorities suspect that boys from the area serve an apprenticeship, just like printers and carpenters do.

Seminoles Join Modern America

Florida's Seminole Indians are giving up alligator wrestling for cowpunching.

The Indians find herding cattle more profitable—and safer—than battling reptiles to entertain tourists.

A century ago the tribe hid in Florida's swamps where it has since lived a primitive life. In recent years the Indians have come out into the world in growing numbers.

They no longer bury their money under trees. They bank it. Instead of living on swamp cabbage and homegrown pork, they regularly buy at the grocery. Indian children no longer roam in the Everglades. Nearly all go to school.

Many youngsters wouldn't be caught dead wearing tribal dress in public.

Not all, of course, have taken up the new ways. But one old man summed up the feelings of an ever-growing number of Seminoles: "Nowadays, Indian is better off adopting white man's ways. We have to live in the future instead of always talking about how many deer our grandfathers killed on a hunt."

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Weather Gets Hotter, but Colder

If you think the world is getting warmer, you're right. But if you think it is getting cooler—you're right, too.

At least that's what scientists say. They explain that for the past 50 years, the world has been gradually getting warmer. But there have been short periods when the trend was reversed. We are apparently in such a period now.

Then, probably, the warming trend will continue. If past experience is a correct guide, the cooling trend will end about 1965.

The slow warming trend since 1900 has had many effects. On the prairies of Canada, farmers can grow crops 50 to 100 miles farther north.

In parts of New England, warmer weather has killed birch trees. In Sweden, trees grow on mountain slopes 65 feet higher than they did in 1930.

Animals have moved north. The mockingbird, once the symbol of the American south, now awakens New Yorkers. Opposums, rare north of Virginia 50 years ago, are now common in Massachusetts.

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IN THIS ISSUE—

- Italy's Piedmont
- U. S. Piedmont
- Christmas Cards

...also, Celebes Pirates, Seminole Indians

Editor—Ralph Gray
Assistants—Arthur P. Miller Jr., Frank Sartwell, Liva Baker, Lea Ridgley

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NO ISSUE NEXT TWO WEEKS—
January 1, 1962: Southeast Asia

Library of Congress

Troika on a snowy Moscow street about 1920

Troika Meets Tough Sledding at U.N.

HOW in the world did a horse-drawn sled ever get mixed up in the grave international discussions of the United Nations?

It happened when Russia wanted to change the structure of the U. N. Instead of one strong Secretary General, the Russians proposed a three-man committee.

One man would represent the Western nations, another would represent the Communists, and the third would be chosen by "neutrals" that haven't taken sides in the present East-West struggle.

The idea reminded many people of the troika, a Russian sled. The word comes from the Russian for three. All troikas are pulled by three horses, side by side.

The Russians declared the three-man group at the top of the U. N. could do the same, pulling nations toward a more peaceful world.

Other countries, including the United States, felt that, since each of the three men would have a veto, this form of troika would suffer from having one of the "horses" refusing to cooperate, lying down when the others were trying to go someplace.

The troika was not accepted by the U. N. but its hoofbeats can still be heard faintly; the Russians say they will bring it up again later.